Census on the Alligator population

222. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has recently decided to conduct the first ever census on the Alligator population in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether large number of Alligators had died in the past few months in mysterious circumstances in the National Chambal Sanctuary;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the details of steps taken to check such rising deaths of Alligators in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRl S. REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) Alligators are not found in India. However, census of Gharials are conducted on a regular basis. As per the last census conducted in 2007, the estimated number of Gharials in various Sanctuaries has been about 1645.

(c) and (d) As per the information available, around 105 Gharials have been reported dead during the period between 8.12.2007 and 21.2.2008. No particular reason could be attributed to this mortality of Gharials. However, possibility of nephro-toxin entering via the food-chain could not be ruled out.

(e) The important steps taken by the Government to check the Gharial mortality are as follows:

(i) The Ministry of Environment & Forests has constituted a Crisis Management Group to coordinate the efforts to control Ghariyal mortality.

(ii) Expertise of international experts has been obtained for the investigation purpose. Tissues/Blood samples have been sent for laboratory investigations.

(iii) Immediate financial assistance to the tune of Rs. 12.08 lakhs has been provided to the State of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh for mitigation of Gharials mortality apart from grant of Rs. 27.295 lakhs for the National Chamballs Gharial Sanctuary, for the year 2007-08.

(iv) Breeding of Gharials in captivity has been successfully standardized and as and when required, captive breed Gharials are released in wild also.

(v) All efforts have been made by the State Government to stop illegal sand mining thus avoiding any damage to the habitat of Gharials. Further, Inter-State collaboration amongst the States of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh are taken up for conservation & management of Gharials and their habitats.

Regulatory regime on wetlands

223. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to bring in a regulatory regime on wetlands in the country to protect lakes and other water bodies now facing different kinds of encroachments/threats;